

and decay do not enter into the reckoning in his relations with his countrymen. He lived and now lives but for the few; for the majority he is nothing but a flourish of vanity which is trumpeted from time to time across the border into foreign ears. Goethe, not merely a great and good man, but a *culture*, is in German history an interlude without a sequel. Who, for instance, would be able to point to any trace of Goethe's influence in German politics of the last seventy years (whereas the influence, certainly of Schiller, and perhaps of Lessing, can be traced in the political world) ? But what of those five others ? Klopstock, in a most honourable way, became out of date even in his own lifetime, and so completely that the meditative book of his later years, *The Republic of Learning*, has never been taken seriously from that day to this. Herder's misfortune was that his writings were always either new or antiquated. Thus for stronger and more subtle minds (like Lichtenberg) even Herder's masterpiece, his *Ideas for the History of Mankind*, was in a way antiquated at the very moment of its appearance. Wieland, who lived to the full and made others live likewise, was clever enough to anticipate by death the waning of his influence. Lessing, perhaps, still lives to-day—but among a young and ever younger band of scholars. Schiller has fallen from the hands of young men into those of boys, of all German boys. It is a well-known sign of obsolescence when a book descends to people of less and less mature age.—Well, what is it that has thrust these five into the background, so that well-educated men of affairs no longer read